



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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INTERIOR SECRETARY LUJAN ANNOUNCES INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE PROPOSAL TO RESTORE 10 MILLION ACRES OF WETLANDS

Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan today unveiled an interagency report that calls for the beginning of wetlands restoration on 1.3 million acres by 1995 and 10 million acres by 2010.

The report was issued by the Interagency Committee on Wetlands Restoration and Creation, formed as part of the President's Comprehensive Plan for Wetlands announced in August 1991.

"President Bush has directed us to develop an effective program for wetlands restoration and creation on both federal and nonfederal lands," Lujan noted. "The interagency report commits our federal agencies to increase the quantity and quality of the Nation's wetland resources, and to ensure that all federal agencies practice and advocate wetlands stewardship."

The report notes that actions taken during the past four years already have resulted in the restoration or enhancement of almost 900,000 acres of wetlands.

The committee report, "A Proposal for a National Program for Wetlands Restoration and Creation," found that "there is a broad consensus that continued net losses of wetlands are not in the best interest of the nation and that a major effort to restore lost wetlands functions and values is warranted." The report proposes establishment of a National Council for Wetlands Restoration and Creation, comprised of the federal agencies, states and the private sector, to implement the program.

The report sets a short term goal of beginning restoration of 1.3 million acres by 1995 and a long term goal of beginning restoration on 10 million acres by 2010.

The committee emphasized that it is not proposing a regulatory program and the recommendation does not include restoration or creation conducted as part of mitigation for a federal or state regulatory program. On private lands, the restoration and creation initiative is strictly limited to voluntary participation by landowners.